

00970

c. 1972/05/09

...REPEATING FOR CLIENT AMS 16-17...

LL

AMS 16

INDOCHINA - THO 2 PARIS

THO, HOLDING HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE HE BEGAN COMING HERE IN 1968 FOR SECRET TALKS PARALLELING THE PEACE CONFERENCE, STATED: "WE WANT A SETTLEMENT OF BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS...IF WE CANNOT SETTLE THE POLITICAL ISSUES, THEN THE WHOLE PROBLEM REMAINS IN ABEYANCE."

THE HANOI ENVOY CLAIMED THAT BY CALLING FOR A CEASEFIRE, PRESIDENT NIXON WAS IN EFFECT SEEKING A PROLONGATION OF THE WAR. PRESIDENT NIXON PUT FOUR CONDITIONS IN HIS MAY 8 CEASEFIRE OFFER:

- 1- ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR MUST BE RETURNED,
- 2- THERE MUST BE AN INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED CEASEFIRE THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA,
- 3- ONCE THE PRISONERS OF WAR ARE RELEASED AND THE INTERNATIONALLY SUPERVISED CEASEFIRE HAS BEGUN, THE U.S. WOULD HALT ALL ACTS OF FORCE THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA,

- 4- AT THAT TIME, THE U.S. WOULD PROCEED WITH A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL AMERICAN FORCES FROM VIETNAM IN FOUR MONTHS.

THO SAID THAT THE FOUR-MONTH TIME LIMIT AT FIRST SIGHT APPEARED TO INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT.

"BUT I REMIND YOU THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR PRESIDENT NIXON SET A SIX MONTH TIME LIMIT FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN FORCES," HE ADDED. AS TWO MONTHS HAVE SINCE ELAPSED, YOU WILL SEE THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAS JUST MADE A SUBTRACTION.... WHICH IN NO WAY REFLECTS GOODWILL ON HIS PART."

THO SAID THAT NORTH VIETNAM AND THE (VIET CONG) PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT DEMANDED NOT ONLY THE RESIGNATION OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU BUT A CHANGE OF POLICY BY THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION.

THE HANOI ENVOY REITERATED THAT NORTH VIETNAM DID NOT WISH TO IMPOSE A COMMUNIST REGIME IN SAIGON.

"WHAT WE WANT IS A TRIPARTITE GOVERNMENTS OF NATIONAL CONCORD. ONE PART WOULD BE COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF THE P.R.G., THE OTHER OF THE PRESENT SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND THE THIRD OF THE LEADERS OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS GROUPINGS."

HE ADDED: "NOW YOU MAY FIND THAT MANY PEOPLE WHO JOIN SUCH A COALITION GOVERNMENT DO NOT APPROVE OF THE UNITED STATES POLICY, BUT NEITHER DO THEY APPROVE THE POLICY OF THE P.R.G."

THO WAS ASKED POINT BLANK WHETHER HE WAS PREPARED TO MEET DR. KISSINGER AGAIN.

HE REPLIED: WE DO NOT THINK MR. NIXON IS YET PREPARED FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE HE IS INTENSIFYING THE WAR WITH HIS BLOCKADE AND BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM. WE ARE HOWEVER READY TO PURSUE THE NEGOTIATIONS, PUBLIC AND SECRET, WITH THE AIM OF ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT".

HE ADDED: "MY PRESENCE HERE IS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE AND GOODWILL TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY WITH THE AMERICANS...IT IS NOW UP TO PRESIDENT NIXON."

REUTER LS/HG1346

DECLASSIFIED

Authority E012458
By AT NARA D-103-800

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVE